

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 HA-05 SY-05 ISO-00 AF-10 MCT-01 OPR-02
A-01 OC-06 CCO-00 IO-13 AS-01 /094 W
-----047796 251727Z /41

O 242000Z APR 78
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1986
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE
COMUSFORAZ IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL OPORTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0272

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS,PINT, PO
SUBJECT: AZOREAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PONTA DELGADA 0200; PONTA DELGADA 0266;
PONTA DELGADA 0268

SUMMARY: PONTA DELGADA HAS REMAINED OUTWARDLY CALM SINCE
A SECOND CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LOCAL YOUTHS AND RIOT POLICE
ON THURSDAY. HOWEVER,THE SUBSEQUENT, HIGHLY UNORTHODOX
ARREST AND TRANSFER TO LISBON OF FIVE SUSPECTS IN THE ALMEIDA
SANTOS INCIDENT, AN ACTION PROTESTED BY THE REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT, HAS KEPT TENSIONS FAIRLY HIGH. RGA PRESIDENT
MOTA AMARAL HAS GAINED WIDE POPULARITY FOR HIS STRONG DEFENSE
OF REGIONAL PREROGATIVES DURING LAST WEEK'S EVENTS. END SUMMARY

1. PONTA DELGADA CALM: THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS IN
PONTA DELGADA SINCE THE LISBON-BASED RIOT POLICE WERE SENT
BACK TO THEIR BARRACKS ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON FOLLOWING A
SECOND CLASH WITH LOCAL YOUTHS EARLIER THE SAME DAY. A LATER,
POTENTIALLY MORE SERIOUS CONFRONTATION WAS NARROWLY AVERTED
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WHEN FLA LEADER JOSE DE ALMEIDA,ACTING AT THE INFORMAL REQUEST
OF THE ACTING REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, PREVAILED UPON THE ASSEMBLED
CROWD TO DISPERSE. THE RIOT POLICE COMPANY WAS RELIEVED
BY AN EQUAL SIZED PARATROOP UNIT ON APRIL 24 AND SENT BACK
TO LISBON.

2. FLA SYMPATHIZERS ARRESTED: NONETHELESS, TENSIONS HAVE

REMAINED HIGH BECAUSE OF THE PRE-DAWN ARREST AND IMMEDIATE TRANSFER TO LISBON BY MILITARY AIRCRAFT SUNDAY OF FOUR PERSONS SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANHANDLING OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ALMEIDA SANTOS ON APRIL 15. A FIFTH INDIVIDUAL WAS ARRESTED AND FLOWN TO LISBON ON APRIL 24. CURIOUSLY, WHILE ALL HAVE FLA CONNECTIONS, NONE SEEMS TO HAVE ACTUALLY PARTICIPATED DIRECTLY IN THE ASSAULT AGAINST ALMEIDA SANTOS. THIS HAS SPURRED SPECULATION THAT THE POLICE ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN GAINING INFORMATION ON THE FLA ITSELF.

3. RGA PROTESTS MANNER OF ARRESTS: THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE PROTESTING THE "EXCEPTIONAL" PROCEDURES USED IN THE ARREST OF THE FOUR AND DEMANDED THEIR PROMPT RETURN TO PONTA DELGADA AND PLACEMENT IN THE CUSTODY OF THE LOCAL CRIMINAL COURT.

4. MOTA AMARAL'S TRIUMPHANT RETURN: MEANWHILE, ON SATURDAY, APRIL 22, ABOUT TWO THOUSAND PERSONS ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMED RGA PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN PONTA DELGADA FOLLOWING HIS WEEK OF TALKS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND A QUICK STOPOVER IN TERCEIRA FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE REGIONAL PSD POLITICAL COMMISSION. IN HIS COMMENTS AT THE AIRPORT AND LATER TO A CROWD GATHERED TO CHEER HIM IN FRONT OF THE RGA OFFICES DOWNTOWN, MOTA AMARAL CHARGED THAT THE GOP HAD SENT THE RIOT POLICE COMPANY TO PONTA DELGADA WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION

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WITH THE RGA AS REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION. HE ALSO PLEADED FOR PUBLIC CALM AND UNITY OF THE AZOREAN PEOPLE BEHIND THEIR DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

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5. REGIONAL PSP POLITICAL COMMISSION MEETS: FOLLOWING AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING CALLED BY MOTA AMARAL APRIL 21, THE REGIONAL PSP POLITICAL COMMISSION ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE

NOTE BY OC/T: SECTION 2 OF 2 PONTA DELGADO 272 NOT YET RECEIVED IN DEPARTMENT. SECTION 2 SERVICED AND WILL FOLLOW.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 272

EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH THE RGA PRESIDENT FOR THE
"FIRM" MANNER IN WHICH HE HANDLED THE "PRESENT CRISIS".
THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO CALLED FOR PUBLIC CALM AND THE AVOIDANCE
OF "TRAPSTO DESTROY OR ENDANGER THE CONSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY
AND PEACE OF THE ARCHIPELAGO". FINALLY IN A DOUBLE-
EDGED MESSAGE TO LISBON, AND IN CONTRAST TO THE MADEIRAN PSD,
THE AZOREAN PSD CALLED ON ITS ADHERENTS IN TO CELEBRATE THE 25TH
OF APRIL AS A DECISIVE AND HISTORIC DATE FOR THE
POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY OF THE REGION.

6. COMMENT: IMPLICIT IN MOTA AMARAL'S CALL FOR CALM, UNITY AND
RESPECT FOR THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT IS A SUSPICION WIDELY HELD BY MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY MAY BE DELIBERATELY
SEEKING TO PROVOKE UNREST IN THE ARCHIPELAGO TO JUSTIFY
A SLOWDOWN OR REVERSAL OF THE AUTONOMY PROCESS, OR EVEN
THE PRESIDENTIAL DISSOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.
THE VEHEMENTLY ANTI-SOCIALIST COMMANDER OF THE AZOREAN AIR
ZONE, BRIG. GEN. TOMAS CONCEICAO E SILVA, TOLD THE AMCONSUL THAT
THE SENDING OF ALMEIDA SANTOS AND THE RIOT POLICE
TO THE REGION AT THIS TIME COULD ONLY HAVE HAD THAT PURPOSE.
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THE MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE AZORES, GEN. JOSE ALVES MORGADO,
DOES NOT ENDORSE THIS CONSPIRATORIAL THEORY. IN PRIVATE,
HE SIMPLY CHARACTERIZES THE SOARES GOVERNMENT'S RECENT AZOREAN
PERFORMANCE AS "STUPID", WHILE EMPHASIZING THAT PRESIDENT
EANES HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

7. MOTA AMARAL'S UNPRECEDENTEDLY WARM AIRPORT WELCOME
UNDERScores POPULAR CONCERN OVER A PERCEIVED THREAT TO REGIONAL
AUTONOMY FROM LISBON, A CONCERN THE RGA HAS NOT SOUGHT TO
DISCOURAGE. IT IS ALSO A MANIFESTATION OF BROAD SUPPORT

FOR THE RGA PRESIDENT'S VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF REGIONAL PREROGATIVES
DURING THE PAST WEEK'S EVENTS. WHATEVER DAMAGE MOTA
AMARAL'S STANCE MAY CAUSE TO HIS RELATIONS WITH THE GOP,
HE IS NOW RIDING HIGH ON A LOCAL WAVE OF POPULARITY.
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